GOVDOC
BRA
4248

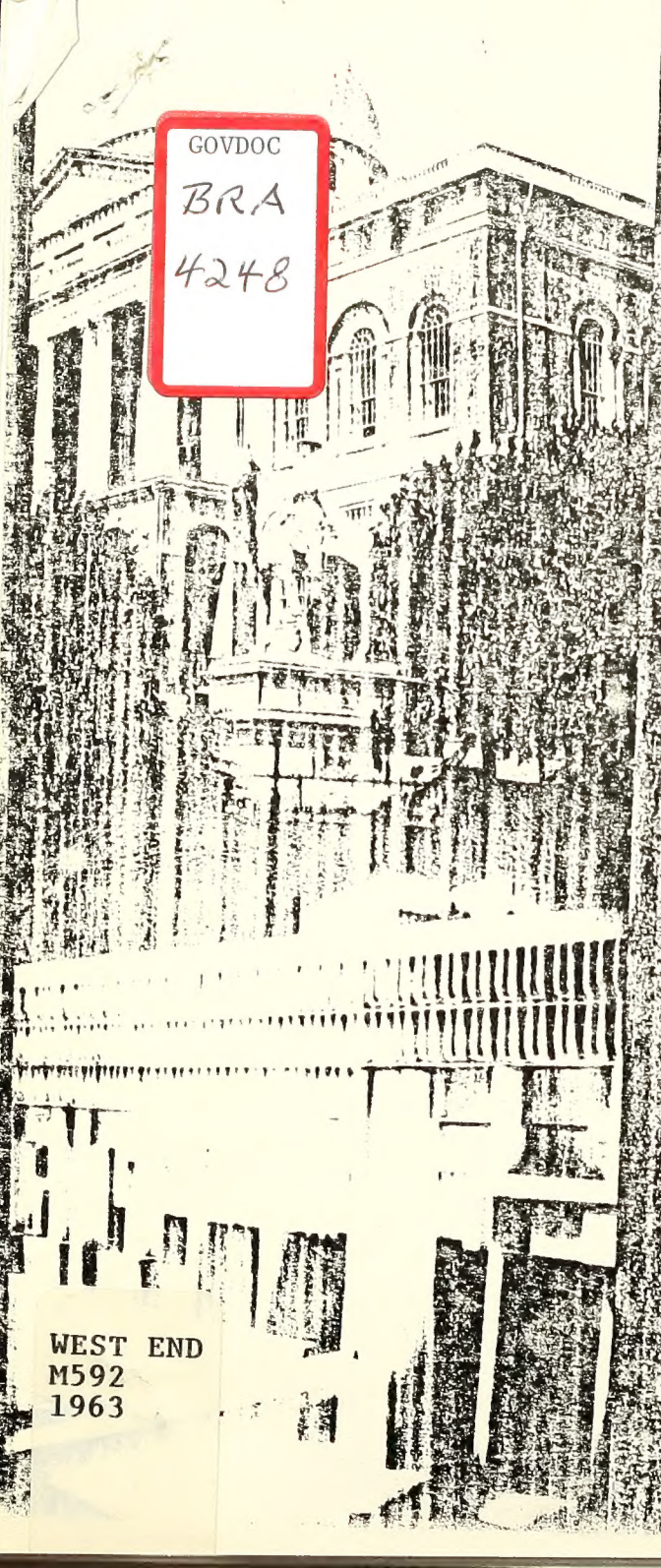
OLD WESTON CHURCH (Methodist)

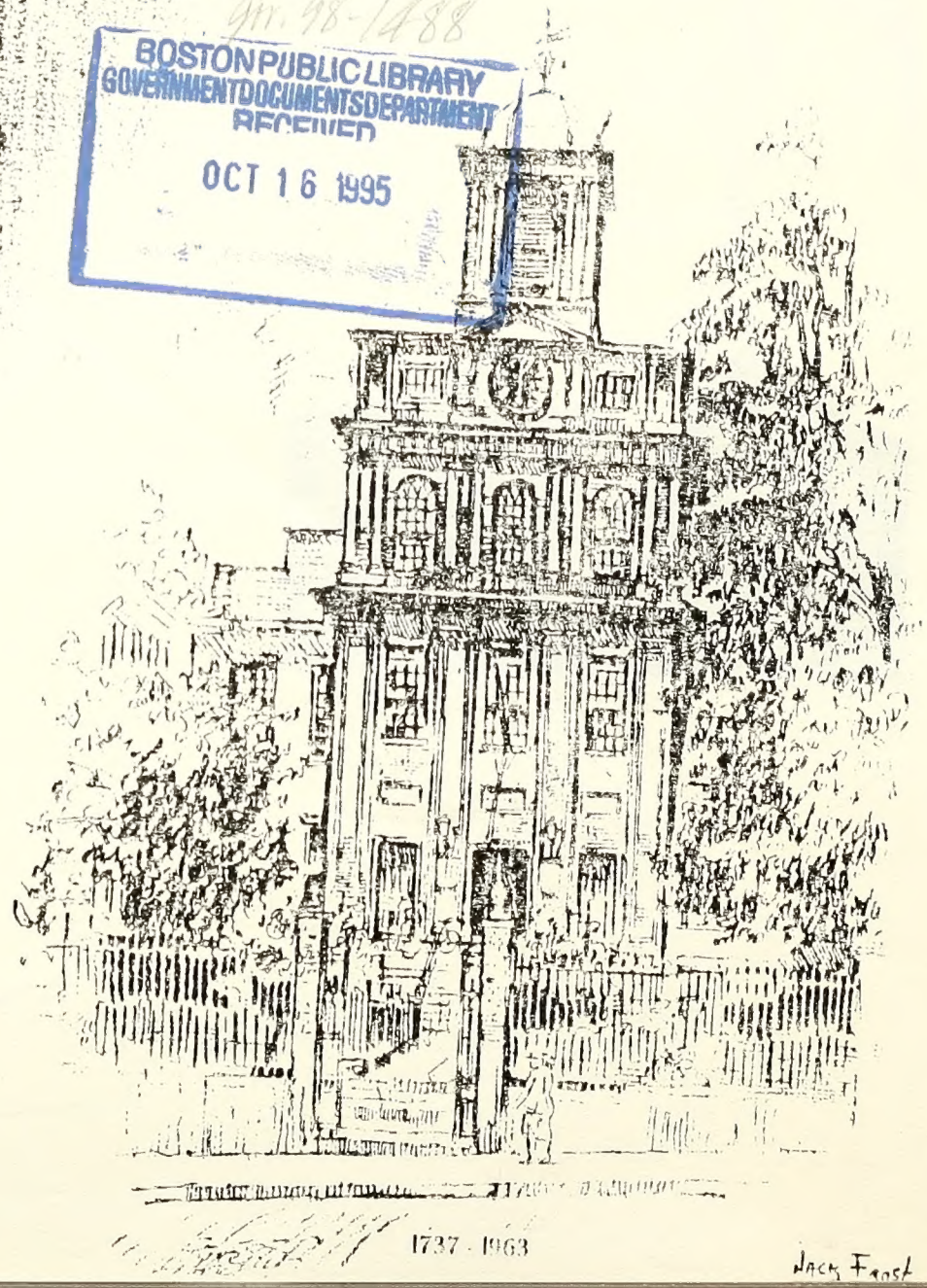
A NEW CHURCH FOR THE NEW BOSTON

Property of
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Library

gov. 98-1488

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED
OCT 16 1995





1737 - 1963

Jack Frost

WEST END
M592
1963

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED
OCT 16 1995

THE METHODIST CHURCH
BOSTON AREA
BISHOP JAMES K. MATHEWS
581 BOYLSTON STREET, BOSTON 16, MASSACHUSETTS

September, 1963

Dear Methodist Friends,

It is very gratifying to me to know that Methodists will soon restore and modernize Old West Church so that it may serve the New Boston.

Old West is an historic church closely linked with our national development since the very beginning. In this church the torch of liberty which preceded the American Revolution was lighted.

Here the fires of the abolition movement burned brightly and continued throughout the Civil War. When it ceased temporarily to function as a church, it continued to minister to Boston's West End as a branch of the Boston Public Library until recent years.

Now the church is reborn, with the congregation of merged First-Copley as the nucleus. I am happy to say that the New England Conference of the Methodist Church is strongly supporting a drive for funds so that Old West will once again be a center of Protestantism in this neighborhood.

It deserves our united support.

Very sincerely yours,

James K Mathews

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

JOHN F. COLLINS
MAYOR

September 20, 1963

My dear Methodist friends:

I am deeply gratified to learn that the Methodist denomination is in the process of restoring and renovating the historic Old West Church to make it once again a vital religious force in ministering to the section.

Before and during the Revolution, Old West Church in its original edifice, built in 1737, rendered enthusiastic support to the cause of the patriots in their struggle for American Independence.

We urge all Bostonians to give their assistance in restoring this precious bit of American history and we hope that all visitors to the city will visit the church before they leave.

My congratulations to all who are working in this cause.

Sincerely,

John F. Collins

John F. Collins
Mayor

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
Boston Public Library

http://www.archive.org/details/oldwestchurchmet00bost

Old West Church

By Fanny Goldstein

Librarian at the West End Branch of the Boston Public Library which ministered to knowledge in the district from 1896 to 1960. This article, written shortly before the death of this devout Jewess, was part of her effort to save the church from destruction.

We live in a swift moving age of change and religion must needs keep pace. The change we accept but the reverence which is due the past we ignore.

Hence, whenever there are any examples of architecture of yesterday left in our communities, these should be cherished and preserved at any price because of their irreplaceable American historical significance.

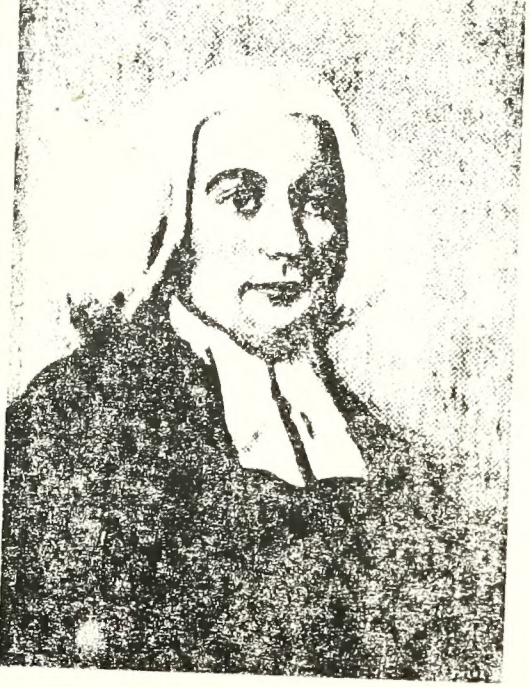
A shining example of such a building is Old West Church..... It is rich in history and background.....It has a hoary and dramatic past and now, after a brief period of quiescence, is to add a new chapter in the future. The church has functioned in two edifices. The first was a wooden structure erected in 1737 and demolished in 1806 to make way for the present red brick building.....

The last service as a church was on April 18, 1892. After some controversy it was remodelled and reopened as a branch public library on February 3, 1896.....

The work of what had once been an active, pulsating library was slowed down due to the Cambridge street widening. It was estimated that in 1922 when I took over the branch there was a daily attendance of over 2,000. In 1960 less than 200 a day used the building.

About 1958 the Development Plan moved in. The scattered remaining residents were moved to other areas. Once again Old West Church from 1737-1892, and the West End Branch Library since 1896, appeared to face the inevitable - an uncertain future or extinction to give way to the progress of civilization...

The old order changeth and gives place to the new. In 1961 the previous building has, through the Grace of God, whose ways are inscrutable and manifold for good, been awarded a new lease of life. Once again it will revert to religion. The Methodists have bought the building. Now, under their guidance and spiritual leadership, this precious heritage of the past looks forward to a new rebirth of greater service in a modern age.



JONATHAN MAYHEW D.D. (1720-1766)
Pastor of West Church, Boston
"Asserior of Civil and Religious Liberties"

History was again made in 1960 when the then Senator John F. Kennedy cast his ballot in the Presidential election at the polling place booth in the West End branch of the Boston Public Library, formerly the historic West Church.

President and Mrs. Kennedy are shown here leaving the Old West Church after casting their ballots.

he New Boston Demands It!

THE OLD WEST CHURCH (METHODIST) will serve in a community which includes:

The Massachusetts General Hospital and Medical Center which has a population of 7,000 persons;

The Charles River Park Development which, when completed will include ten high rise upper income apartment buildings with 2400 family units, and a commercial center which will include a 300 room motor hotel, a small office building, a motion picture house, a supermarket, and shopping promenade;

The new Government Center which will have a daytime population of 60,000 persons;

The North Slope of Beacon Hill with a large population of resident students and elderly; Suffolk University, which has plans for expansion, is but a short distance from the church;

Greater Boston and New England to be served through radio and television.

THE OLD WEST CHURCH (METHODIST) will be the only Protestant Church in the Charles River Park Development, and with the Church of St. John the Evangelist (Episcopal), will be one of two Protestant churches serving the immediate area.

The need for the Old West Church is readily apparent. The location of the Old West Church is ei viable, for it is set almost in the geographic center, on a major corner of the community outlined above. The opportunity for the Old West Church to become a meaningful church in this community is perhaps unduplicated anywhere else in the country.

Drop-In services such as:

A high fidelity chapel with facilities for choice of music, prayer and sermonette

Reading room, including information of cultural interests and church information for tourists;

Rooms for men who may wish to play checkers or pinochle;

Exhibitions of works by local artists.

Counseling:

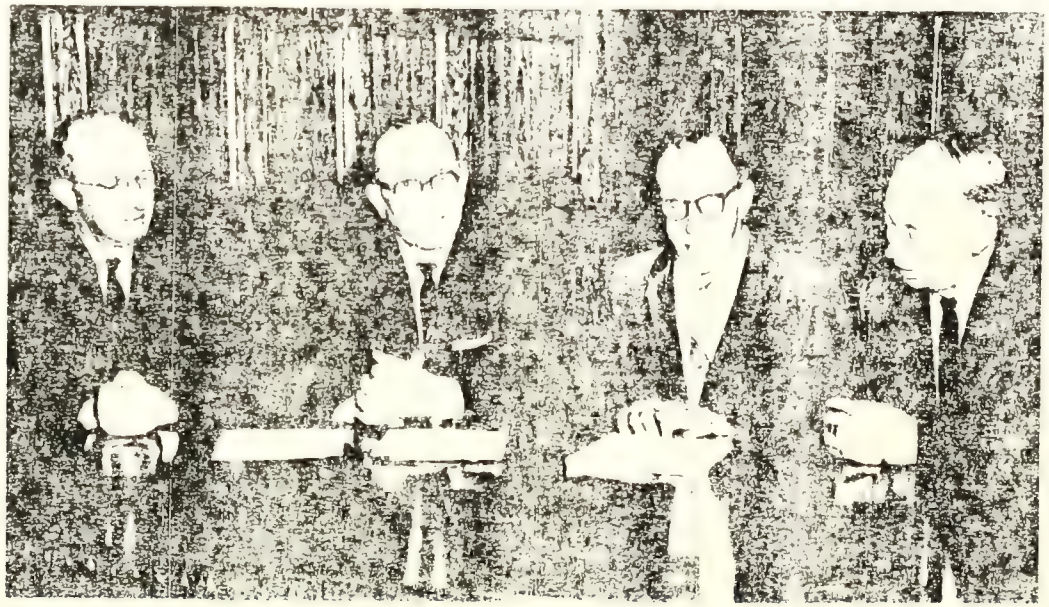
A minister will be available for personal counseling around the clock for anyone in distress;

A referral service for those with special needs.

Accommodations for conferences and meetings:

Facilities for meetings of the New England Annual Conference and its commissions and committees will be available including arrangements for parking.

While the Old West Church will be Methodist supported and Methodist related it must rise above denomination. **Old West Church must be a community church.**



Prominent Members of the Metropolitan Methodist Planning Commission who outlined the strategy for the renovation and the program of Old West Church. Left to right: Dr. George I. Rohrbough, president of Chandler School for Women; Dr. Harold Case, chairman, president of Boston University; Hugh Farrington, Boston realtor; and Alden Eberly, assistant general secretary, Boston Y. M. C. A.

A New Program For The New Boston

Studies of great downtown churches across the country show that two characteristics make for greatness — able leadership, and creative programming.

THE OLD WEST CHURCH (METHODIST) WILL HAVE ABLE LEADERSHIP

The staff of the Old West Church (Methodist) will include two experienced pastors. One pastor will be a distinguished preacher and will emphasize the worship ministry along with the radio and television ministry. The second minister will have major responsibility for developing an imaginative program to meet the needs of the community.

Three interns, theological students from Boston University School of Theology, will serve with the staff, assisting in worship, Christian education, student work.

THE OLD WEST CHURCH (METHODIST) WILL HAVE CREATIVE PROGRAMMING

To serve human needs in the West End of the New Boston , an imaginative program is contemplated. Among the projected programs are the following:

Multiple services on Sunday to accommodate diversity of interests, including a radio and television ministry, outstanding guest preachers including Methodist Bishops.

Weekday groups and activities such as:

A day nursery;

Group activities for children and youth;

Noontime lunch programs including lectures and study groups;

A couples' program;

A senior citizens' program;

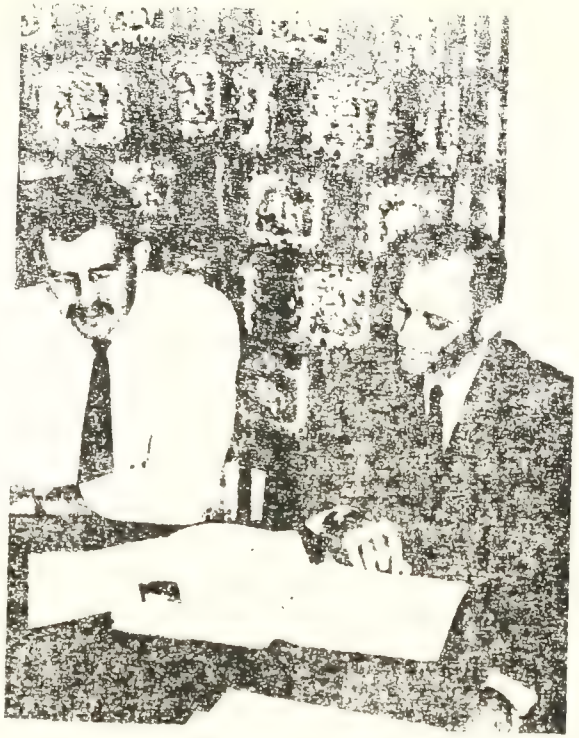
Institutional and industrial seminars directed to business and professional people;

Information sessions about Protestantism;

Evening programs of music and meditation at the height of traffic;

Bible study groups while waiting for traffic to lessen between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m.

Report On The West End Seminar



The Rev. John A. Russell, Methodist Chaplain at M. I. T. and Director of the West End Seminar, and the Rev. John R. Lilly, pastor of First-Copley Methodist Church, shown here making plans for the seminar.

Sponsored by a grant from a private foundation, thirteen theological students from Harvard, Yale, Boston University and Andover-Newton, gathered on June 2, 1963 to begin six weeks of work and study in the West End of Boston.

The purpose of the seminar was to help shape a ministry for the Old West Church (Methodist). Several of the students were employed on a voluntary basis in the hospital complex, Charles River Park apartments, and the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Other students worked on a representative survey of the area surrounding Old West Church.

Three evenings a week the students gathered with members of the First Copley parish to share ideas and to hear outstanding resource leaders from the Boston community.

The results of the seminar have been valuable in indicating the kinds of persons living in the area around Old West Church and suggesting programs to meet the needs of these persons.

"This congregation has a tremendous opportunity to serve the hospitals, government center, and apartments surrounding it. This is not the example of a city church. Rather it is persons who seek to know what God wills and then in His strength to do that will." - The Rev. John A. Russell, Methodist Chaplain at M.I.T.

"The church and the city should be one of the primary resources for working with and helping people to adjust to the new American urban environment." - Gordon Gotsche, Relocation Director, Boston Redevelopment Authority.

"In the modern city the church is more than a place for neighborhood worship. It is the means for unifying work and life in an otherwise impersonal and fragmented society." - Professor Robert C. Wood, Professor of Economics at M.I.T.

These Commend It!

DR. HAROLD C. CASE

The statesmanlike decision of the trustees of the First Methodist Church and of Copley Church to merge and to pool their combined resources in leadership and funds in the new Old West Church is of great importance for liberal Protestantism in the City of Boston. It will be possible for the first time in several decades for Methodists to join colleagues in other denominations in placing at the center of a magnificent new development in Boston a church distinctive in architecture, led strategically, and with promise of influence in city, state, and national affairs.

I regard the undertaking of the campaign for funds for this church as one of the most important Protestant enterprises in many years.

Harold C. Case

Harold C. Case
President, Boston University

DR. GUY H. WAYNE

Having at the heart of the New Boston an ecumenical religious program in an historical building which has played a vital part in the fight for freedom and opportunity for all is an exciting adventure in the mid-twentieth century. This event solicits the concern of every citizen as well as of every churchman who yearns for a high standard of values to influence and control the home life, the cultural attitudes, community interest, and business practices of the West End.

With enthusiasm I commend this truly significant crusade for renovation funds to generous citizens and churchmen.

Guy H. Wayne

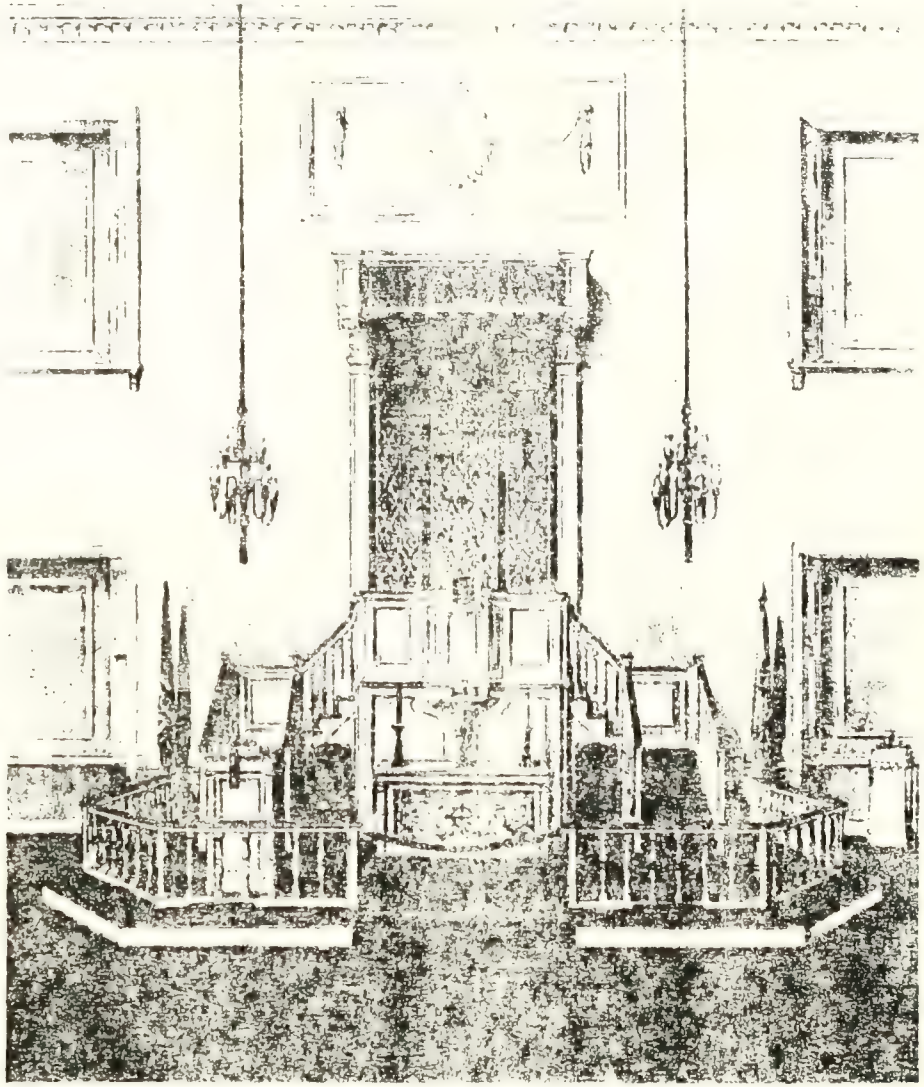
Guy H. Wayne
District Superintendent, Boston Methodist Conference

WE HAVE FAITH

that individual Methodists and men of other creeds will join with and financially support Methodists of the New England Conference in the restoration of the old West Church (organized 1737)

Drawn by a deep concern for the historic place of the religious community in old Boston, and challenged by the opportunity to play a part in reestablishing a vigorous Church dedicated to the New Boston, we solicit generous gifts

WE NEED $250,000



PROPOSED PULPIT, OLD WEST CHURCH

ALBERT M. KREIDER, ARCHITECT

Your Participation Will Make It Possible

A New Methodist Church
With A New Methodist Program
(formerly the First-Copley
Methodist Church)

ORIGINALLY BUILT 1906. RENOVATED 1953

EARL H. THOMSON
General Chairman

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF OLD WEST CHURCH (Methodist)

Earl H. Thomson, President

John R. Webb

Miss Esther M. Clement

Edward Fearn

Miss Arnila Harrison

The Reverend G. Vaughn Shedd

Mrs. Lillian Smith

THE BOSTON METHODIST METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Bishop James K. Mathews
Dr. Harold C. Case, Chairman
Dr. George I. Rohrbough, Vice Chairman
The Rev. Wilbur C. Ziegler, Secretary

The Rev. John E. Barclay
H. Frederick Brown
The Rev. Ernest R. Case
Dr. Harold H. Cramer
Edward C. Drake
Alden Eberly
James F. Farr
Hugh Farrington

James Fraggos
Arthur T. Gregorian
Mason N. Hartman
The Rev. H. Daniel Hawver
Chester A. Higley
Ernest S. Johnson
Oscar E. Keith
Allen Roy Kingston

The Rev. John R. Lilly
Dr. Lemuel K. Lord
Dr. Ralph T. Mirse
The Rev. Ronald W. Ober
The Rev. William J. Ogle
Lester C. Peabody
Stanley Porter
Lorina W. Powell

The Rev. Royden C. Richardson
Roy M. Robinson
The Rev. Joseph A. Stevenson
Dr. Herbert E. Stotts
Earl H. Thomson
C. Vincent Vappi
Dr. George A. Warmer
Dr. Guy H. Wayne